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ABSTRACT

The ways in which educators and schools in the United States have responded to the children of immigrants are explored, and the patterns, causes, and consequences of educational outcomes on immigrants are reviewed. The literature on which this paper draws is diverse, encompassing the work of historians and social scientists. Results of scholarship about immigrants and schooling reveal greater ambiguity and complexity than suggested by popular mythology. Immigrants have embraced American schools, but not as unreservedly as American myth maintains. Schools have been the places where immigrant children joined American society, but not necessarily on the terms educators preferred or with the ease that has been imagined. American schools have had to revise their practices repeatedly to accommodate immigrants, but their success has been uneven. The historical research reviewed in this paper suggests that much contemporary opposition to multicultural education is based on mistaken representations of the past. Valid representation of the past can support the claim that culturally responsive schools, rather than monocultural schools in which polyglot populations were to be homogenized, are the most integrative. (Contains 80 references.) (SLD)

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